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PEQUOT TRAILS JUL 26 '52

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THE SPRING, SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER
BY THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Volume IV

Summer, 1952

Number 2

FOR FUN, FOOD, AND FELLOWSHIP

attend the

ANNUAL MEETING AND SUNDAY NIGHT SUPPER

Where?

Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary
Mystic, Connecticut

When?

Sunday, July 13 — Rain or Shine

What Time?

Business Meeting 4:30 p.m.
Supper 6:00 p.m.

*About the
Supper!*

The Sanctuary will provide the supper at cost. Real home-cooked food prepared and served by our own members. The cost \$1.00 per plate

Any Program?

Yes indeed! Following the supper there will be free wildlife movies for all.

What Must I Do?

Plan now to attend. Fill in and return the enclosed post card so it reaches us by Tuesday, July 8.

PEQUOT TRAILS

Published quarterly, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, by the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc., Mystic, Conn.

Editors

Mrs. Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr. and
Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

A Statement of Purpose:

We want this publication to be of the utmost service to you—to keep you informed concerning activities at the Sanctuary and in your community; to invite your participation in these activities; and to provide you with general articles of education and inspiration regarding conservation subjects. Won't you drop us a line and tell us what you would like to see published? We would appreciate it.

Our Greatest Need

The current era is commonly referred to as one of "troubled times." We find it rather difficult to become seriously concerned about problems other than those of war, self-defense, and politics. We spend billions of dollars building up a defense system capable of defending every inch of our land. Yet, we let millions of tons of our good, rich top soil wash away into our rivers every day—enough, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, to give every college graduate in the state of Connecticut a forty-acre farm. We spend billions more building reservoirs and dams to "control floods and provide electrical power." Many of these projects defeat the very purpose for which they were constructed. They frequently flood more land than they are actually protecting. They provide electrical current that cannot be measured beyond thousands of dollars. And they are filling with silt at a rate that will make them useless after about two generations—long before they are paid for. As the world population increases, we are trying to feed more and more people from less and less soil. How long can this trend continue?

We are so deep in this complex problem that there is no quick and easy solution. We must use some stop-gap measures to temporarily correct our previous mistakes. But such a procedure cannot be the answer. Sooner or later we must get to the "grass roots" of the problem. Watersheds, forests, and farmlands, will have to be managed in such a way as to control water run-off and protect our precious top soil. This solution cannot be applied effectively until the public as a whole becomes aware of the urgent need. This will have to be done through an educational program. Organizations such as your own Sanctuary are pioneering in this field. However, to become really effective, it will have to be the concern of everyone. Conservation education will need to be a part of every school curriculum. Our greatest need is an understanding public. Once they understand, the solution will be relatively simple.

An Appeal for Habitat Preservation

John Baker, President of the National Audubon Society, when he spoke in New London some time ago, made a plea that local groups such as ours in Mystic take action to protect habitat of special value in their own region. He referred particularly to marshes as an example, since marsh drainage is perhaps the most serious form of destructive so-called "land improvement." But he meant to include all kinds of valuable areas.

I thought about his appeal and have been wanting to bring it up for discussion. My resolve was given new impetus when I heard indirectly a few months ago of unnecessary destruction of a special kind of environment. A teacher reported that a school was having a baseball field bulldozed for the use of its students, and in so doing was destroying an exceptionally large stand of the rare moccasin flower, or pink ladyslipper. Here, it seemed to me was something to think about.

Schools are publicly owned. What they do is everybody's business. Undoubtedly, if the value of that wildflower habitat had been brought to the attention of the authorities at the proper time and in the proper way the baseball field could have been moved over a small distance, with no loss to anyone, and the ladyslipper could thus have survived. But—and this is the crux of the matter—a great educational opportunity was lost because there was no one to step in at the proper time to take action. Think of the value to the students if they had been told that their baseball could not be allowed to interfere with other equally valuable kinds of recreation. Think of the value to the students if the baseball players had been allowed to erect a fence around the flowers, to post signs asking people to respect the area, and explaining the purpose of the fence. They'd never be likely to forget this lesson in weighing other values than their own immediate ones. They'd look at the flowers (perhaps for the only time in their lives). They'd learn that land has many uses besides affording a place to play ball, grow food or build houses and that its best use is the one we must consider. If they had learned that principle of the "best use" they'd have learned the main concept of conservation in a better and more dramatic way than their teachers could ever hope to achieve in the classroom.

How then can we create a situation that will remind people, like that teacher who knew about the ladyslipper, to turn immediately to the Sanctuary when such a situation comes up? We need wide publicity on some action that will make people realize we are not a

static organization operating only in our own backyards but rather that we represent the conservation conscience of the whole community. Perhaps this could be discussed at the next meeting.

Adele Arisman

Screen Tour News

We have presented Audubon Screen Tour films and lectures for four complete seasons—a total of 20 programs. Ever since our first program four years ago, we have been endeavoring to find some means of making these programs available to a maximum number of our members and at the same time keep them on a sound financial basis. In doing this we have changed our plans somewhat each year hoping to find the proper solution. Lacking a centrally located auditorium, we have held Screen Tour programs in four separate communities, believing this to be a service to our members. However, this did not work out well financially and a new approach had to be found. As you know, all five of this past season's programs were held in Buell Hall, New London. Here we had a fine auditorium, outstanding 16mm carbon arc projection, and wonderful cooperation on part of school officials. Our audiences were larger and we are happy to report that for the first time we have finished a Screen Tour season in the black.

Although it may seem somewhat early, considerable activity is in progress behind the scenes making arrangements for the 1952-53 program series. Again, all tours will be held in Buell Hall as this has been our most successful arrangement to date. Complete details concerning these tours will be mailed to all members at a later date. However, a preliminary announcement of next season's schedule follows:

1952-53 SCREEN TOURS

- Oct. 13—Robert C. Hermes "Bonaventure Diary"
Nov. 11—Laurel Reynolds "Western Discovery"
Feb. 1—Allan Cruickshank "Santa Lucia Sea Cliffs"
March 3—Alfred M. Bailey "High Country"
May 6—Alexander Sprunt, Jr. "Wing Havens"

Nature Course for Children

A nature course for children, ages 8 through 12, will be held at the Sanctuary during the month of August. This course, teaching conservation through fun and recreation, will be conducted by Rudy Favretti, a member of the Sanctuary and a student at the University of Connecticut, where he is majoring in agriculture and conservation. More complete details will be announced in local papers at a later date.

Questions and Answers

There seems to be a set of stock questions that go along with each season of the year. The following questions are the ones being asked most frequently. It is hoped that the answers may prove interesting and enlightening to all our readers.

Should I feed birds in the summer?

The choice is really up to you as there is no harm in feeding or in not feeding during the summer months. If you want to see more birds, I would say that summer feeding definitely pays. Purple finches, for example, can be enticed to stay longer, and even nest, if a supply of sunflower seeds is available throughout the summer. Catbirds, orioles, and other summer birds will bring their young to the trays to feed, providing opportunities for close observation.

Birds will not become entirely dependent on your feeding station but will leave it readily to feed upon their favorite insects or weed seeds.

What can I do to keep English Sparrows out of boxes intended for other birds?

I wish there was a simple remedy that could be applied in all cases, but there isn't. The best we can do is discourage the English Sparrows whenever possible. I've found that it is useless to keep destroying the nest as they built it. They never seem to learn, and will keep repeating the operation for days. However, if the nest is destroyed after eggs have been laid, they are not nearly so anxious to repeat the whole process again.

Other suggestions that may help, include keeping the nesting boxes away from buildings, when possible. Avoid the use of perches as this just makes an ideal place for the English Sparrow to sit and ward off all comers. They aren't necessary, anyhow. Keep your wren box entrances just seven eighths of an inch in diameter.

What should I do with young birds that have fallen from the nest?

In nine cases out of ten the best thing you can do is to **leave the young bird alone**. The chances are that it hasn't fallen from the nest but is just out on its first day's venture and is learning to fly. Like all children, it will holler when hungry. If you do not disturb it, the parent bird will eventually bring the necessary food. If you have a cat around, it would be well to sit the bird in a bush that would afford some protection—or lock up the cat. When you are convinced that the bird is too young to be out of the nest, try putting it back in. If the above suggestions do not work, then you may be justified in taking the bird in the house and trying to rear it.

Poster Contest Winners

Top honors in the Sanctuary's conservation poster contest were won by Miss Carol Haefner of New London in the high school division and by Andri Noel of Mystic in the elementary school division. Second place honors were won by Ira May of New London High School and by Thomas Joel Ham of Elizabeth Street School in Norwich. Honorable mention awards in the high school class were won by Nancy Harrison, Elinor Farrell, John Muschinsky, Robert Warakomsky, and Ronald Koley, all of New London High School, and by James A. Ward of Fitch High School. Honorable mention awards in the elementary division went to Karen Deming of Uncasville and to Noreen Trant, Claire Noel, Carol Herman, Nadine Walsh, and Maurice Mitchell of Broadway School in Mystic.

In winning first prize Miss Haefner was the recipient of a \$25 Savings Bond. Andri Noel was awarded \$10 in cash as first prize in the grade school division. Second prize winners were also awarded cash prizes. All contest winners were awarded appropriate certificates and ribbons. All awards were made at a special open house program held at the Sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, June 1.

A total of 137 posters were entered from schools in Mystic, Stonington, Westerly, Norwich, Groton, Uncasville, and New London. Judges for the contest were Robert Fulton Logan, Kenneth Bates, and Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

The contest was sponsored by the Sanctuary's Museum Committee, under the guidance of its chairman, Mrs. Richard P. Grover. Due to the success of this year's initial endeavor it is planned to make this contest an annual event.

May 4 Open House Attracts Many Visitors

The official opening of the Sanctuary on May 4 for the summer season attracted the most people ever to visit the Sanctuary on a single day. Between four and five hundred members, guests, and friends, visited the Sanctuary during the three-hour open house period on Sunday afternoon.

The trailside museum was the center of activities with new and interesting natural history displays. The museum area reserved for displays by other community organizations featured a nature exhibit prepared by the Girl Scouts of the New London Council. The nature trail, too, proved popular and there was a continuous line of hikers on it all afternoon. The forestry demonstration area proved interesting to all those concerned with woodlot management.

Refreshments of coffee, sandwiches,

punch, and cookies, were served throughout the afternoon.

Serving as hostesses were Mrs. Clarence Wimpfheimer, Mrs. Lorenzo Fairbrother, Mrs. Richard P. Grover, Mrs. Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr., Mrs. H. P. Gongaware, and Mrs. J. Reid Johnson.

Bird Identification Courses Well Attended

More than 100 adults attended the two bird identification courses held this spring. The course given in the auditorium of Jennings School, New London, attracted the larger number of registrants, a total of 70, while the course in the Westerly Library attracted a total of 35. Each course included four evening sessions and one early morning field trip during the height of the migration season. Several older Boy Scouts attended the courses and then continued work at the Sanctuary for their Bird Study Merit Badge.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of an identification course is that it tends to interest more people in the fascinating hobby of bird watching. It is hoped that from these recent courses the Sanctuary will acquire a larger nucleus of really enthusiastic birders. With this thought in mind, more field trips are planned for this coming year's schedule.

The continued enthusiastic reception of the course will undoubtedly warrant its being given again this coming winter. Tentative plans now indicate that it will be given in Norwich.

Sanctuary Attendance Increases

Ever since our opening on May 4 we have continued to attract an increasing number of visitors to the Sanctuary. The number of school classes and scout groups using the Sanctuary for instructional purposes in nature study has surpassed all previous years. More than a thousand children and their leaders have visited the trailside museum and the nature trails. Many groups have used the Sanctuary to work on some special study project. However, with schools now closing for the summer, this type of visitation will be lessened.

In addition to the larger number of children, the adult attendance has also increased proportionately. A glance at our register indicates that we are attracting visitors from many sections of our country.

We are naturally pleased with this increase in attendance as it indicates that our program and our facilities are appealing to more and more people. It's an indication of our effectiveness in the promotion of a conservation program.

Looking Ahead

On June 30, 1952, we will have completed our sixth year of existence as an incorporated community organization. At the end of any such period it is always customary to take some sort of inventory of both past accomplishments and future plans. Previous issues of PEQUOT TRAILS have kept you posted on the past activities of the Sanctuary, so it is the future plans with which this article is concerned.

There is one particular phase of our future plans that is somehow slow in maturing. That is the physical development of our property to make it more conducive of a wildlife sanctuary. Ideally, from the standpoint of a sanctuary, we have too much of the same type of terrain—namely, second-growth hardwoods. Perhaps our most urgent need is the development and management of our water supply. A survey of our water supply is being made and it is hoped that at least one pond can be developed this fall. There are at least two or three areas suitable for pond development depending, of course, on the amount of water that can be supplied on a year-around basis. At least one area should be flooded to create better swamp habitat.

The management of our water supply according to the above plan would benefit the Sanctuary in many ways. Both the pond and the flooded area would attract breeding and migrating waterfowl. Also, the varied vegetation and insect life would attract more song birds. Other forms of wildlife would benefit, also. In addition, this plan would provide for a reserve water supply throughout strategic parts of our forested area.

Other habitat changes can be made through selective cutting. In this case, the undesirable trees and shrubs are removed giving those attractive to wildlife a chance to develop. Also, from the viewpoint of wildlife management, at least two sizable clearings should be made in the more expansive wooded areas. Some sections should be developed as "shrub areas" keeping all shade trees cut back. In other sections, this process should be reversed. Small clearings along some of our trails would make birding a lot more enjoyable.

There are two or three old fields on the Sanctuary property that show the reclamation processes of a forest. These fields are rapidly reverting to young hardwood forests. It would be better to check this process and use the areas for the starting of some evergreen sections—something the Sanctuary lacks.

Much can be done to improve the Sanctuary through planting. There should be a wildlife border around the parking lot. This would be more attractive to visitors as well as to wildlife. Other shrub borders could be planted along stone walls and rocky out-crop-

pings. Island plantings of trees and shrubs could be placed advantageously in one or two places. The area around the buildings could be made more attractive through planting and at the same time benefit wildlife.

The adoption and execution of a plan such as suggested above would differentiate between our 125 acres of land and that of our neighbors. Actually, we have always been working on this type of plan to a limited degree. There are several factors that account for our seemingly slow progress. We are a young organization and the plantings we have done in the past are just beginning to pay dividends. Of necessity, these plantings were small. Our budget has tended to limit any extensive planting so far. It has also been the largest factor confronting us with regards to pond development. However, it is hoped that this year's budget will provide for both projects. Labor has been another limiting factor. All such projects require more labor than can be spared by your Curator under the present operational procedure.

However, it is not the purpose of this report to submit excuses, but rather to present a plan that we intend to follow just as vigorously as budget, time, and labor will permit. We welcome your suggestions—your brawn—your financial aid.

Bird Notes

Thanks to the expert observations of Mr. Noss, two new birds were added to our official Sanctuary bird list this spring. They were the BAY-BREASTED WARBLER and the BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER.

Mr. Bauer of Quaker Hill reports a ROBIN caring for two young MEADOWLARKS. Some of our members are endeavoring to get some pictures of these unusual proceedings.

Mr. R. O. Erisman of Mystic reports a WHITE-THROAT singing in the middle of June. The question is, is it a single stray bird, or could there be a nesting record for this area? Perhaps we can find the answer.

The WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES are nesting in a box at the SANCTUARY—a big flicker box.

Suet is still very much in demand around the Sanctuary feeding station. In addition to the usual year-around residents, the BALTIMORE ORIOLES and CATBIRDS are very fond of it.

Birds nesting within the immediate vicinity of the trailside museum this year include one or more pairs of the following species: ROBIN, BLUEBIRD, TREE SWALLOW, STARLING, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, SONG SPARROW, CHIPPING SPARROW, BLUE JAY, CATBIRD, YELLOW WARBLER, HOUSE WREN, BROWN THRASHER, and PHOEBE. There were undoubtedly other species but their nests were not definitely located.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Your Tax Dollar and Conservation

The Senate Committee on Appropriations passed H. R. 7314, the agricultural appropriation bill for fiscal year 1953, after adding \$7,022,771 to the total as passed in the House.

Among the increases were an additional \$725,000 for control of forest pests; \$448,000 more for National Forest protection and management, and \$3,000,000 more for construction and maintenance of forest roads and trails. The Senate Committee also restored an item of \$75,000 for national forest acquisition under the Weeks Act.

Despite the increases, fund allotments for the U. S. Forest Service as recommended by the Senate Committee remain \$6,596,050 under appropriations for the current fiscal year, and \$202,000 under budget estimates for next year.

Other increases made by the Senate Committee include \$400,000 for the Soil Conservation Service; \$1,754,142 for the PMA conservation payments to farmers; \$34,129 for the Agricultural Extension Service. The Department of Agriculture item for flood prevention activities was reduced from the \$7,750,000 approved by the House to a flat \$7 million.

Recent Books You Will Enjoy

THE DESERT YEAR

by Joseph Wood Krutch

William Sloan Associates, \$3.75, 270 pp.

This is the story of the plant and animal life that are found during the seasons of a desert's year. It's a constant revelation of the natural history of our arid Southwest.

CRIP, COME HOME

by Ruth Thomas

Harper and Bros., \$2.50, 175 pp.

This book is primarily the story of ten years study of a banded brown thrasher that returned regularly each spring to the author's garden. It becomes an accurate study of the brown thrasher's habits—the type of study that contributes much understanding to both amateur and professional ornithologists.

THIS FASCINATING ANIMAL WORLD

by Alan Devoe

McGraw Hill Book Company, \$3.75, 303 pp.

Mr. Devoe gives the answers to a thousand or more of the questions asked most frequently about the animals of the world.

Your curator will be on vacation the last two weeks in July, however, the Sanctuary will be open during that time.